

## **427.1 Tucson Children's Museum**

**Location:** Tucson Children's Museum, downtown Tucson, 200 S. 6<sup>th</sup> Ave.

**Scope:** Funding will be used for the remodel and construction of an expanded Children's Museum. The facility is currently 16,800 square feet and this project is expected to double the size of the facility. The expanded facility will allow the Museum to increase its public program area to include galleries with interactive exhibits and dedicated space for school tours and Early Childhood Education programs. The additional space will provide opportunities for expanded specialty programming such as community events, cultural festivals and educational camps. The expansion will also include outdoor exhibits, public program space and food service options, allowing the community to utilize the common areas beyond the museum hours of operation. The Museum has seen explosive growth in attendance: an 82 percent increase over the last six years. The added space will allow the Museum to better serve the community by expanding collaborative relationships and educational programming while strategically introducing exhibits in the areas of Early Childhood Education, Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics. Formal agreements, including a long term (25 year) lease, will be executed between the City of Tucson, Pima County and the Children's Museum of Tucson prior to starting this project.

**Benefits:** The Children's Museum Tucson is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization providing fun, play based, interactive, hands-on learning experiences for children and their families. Focused on providing age appropriate development and learning opportunities for children through the power of play, the Children's Museum Tucson has been in operation at its current location in the City of Tucson owned original Carnegie Library building since 1991. With respect to the expanded Museum, benefits to residents of Pima County include:

### Local Community

Education - An expanded facility will create significantly greater opportunities for the Museum to increase the educational benefits to the community, all of which are critical to creating a 21st century work force.

- Early Childhood Education, including school readiness programming for pre-school aged children, physical fitness/health and wellness learning opportunities for kids under 5, collaborative partnerships with area pre-schools and special-needs providers.
- Adventure Learning School Tours (field trips) for kids in elementary school, including instructor-led curriculum designed to enhance classroom lessons, based on the new Common Core and State Academic Standards.
- Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM), including new STEM based exhibits (and associated school tours), expanded STEM programming, such as *STEAM Sundays*, where STEM and Art based activities are offered every Sunday during the summer with reduced admission to the Museum, providing accessibility regardless of economic means.
- More Arts & Culture, including improved and expanded exhibits that provide our community's children with exposure to a diverse and well-rounded curriculum focused on arts and culture.

Community Events - The Museum will feature even more prominent community events focused on critical topics such as literacy, science, health and wellness.

Collaboration - An expanded facility will allow the Children's Museum Tucson to expand the types and frequency of partnerships we have with over 100 non-profit organizations in Pima County.

Quality of Life - With dedicated community space, the Museum will be a hub of family-focused, collaborative events and programming. An expanded Children's Museum will also improve the quality of life in our community for families with children.

#### Tourism

An expanded Children's Museum will allow the Museum to nearly double in size and offer new hands-on, educational, interactive exhibits, making the Museum more attractive as a destination for tourists visiting Tucson and Southern Arizona. A new facility will feature gift shop and food service outlets, increasing potential sales tax for the City. Greater attendance at the Museum will yield more visitors to downtown Tucson and have a positive impact on income for area restaurants and shops as well as visitation to other attractions in the area.

A revitalized and expanded Children's Museum will remain accessible to the residents of Pima County in a downtown location with proximity to major roads, access to parking and a wide variety of food and retail choices. The new facility will also be fully accessible to individuals with disabilities.

An expanded Children's Museum Tucson would benefit the growing community for the next 25 years and beyond. The Museum will be an effective educational and developmental resource where children and their families can learn, grow and discover in a family focused and educational environment.

**Total Cost Estimate:** \$10,000,000

**Bond Funding Estimate:** \$5,000,000

**Other Funding Estimate:** \$5,000,000 from the private fundraising efforts.

**Implementation Periods:** 4, 5

**Project Manager:** City of Tucson in consultation with Pima County (Project requested by Tucson Children's Museum)

**Operator:** Tucson Children's Museum

**Future Operating and Maintenance Costs:** Operating and maintenance costs are shared by the Tucson Children's Museum and the City of Tucson. The City pays building maintenance expenses and the water bill. The Museum pays custodial, mission specific equipment maintenance and all utilities excluding water. The City's estimated increase in operating and maintenance costs is \$60,000 a year.

**Regional Benefits:** The Museum's geographic focus is Southern Arizona, primarily Pima County, where 83 percent of Museum visitors reside. Forty-three percent of all school group participants are from low-income families and more than 40 percent of general admissions are from low-income areas. The museum offers reduced or free admission on 10 percent of open days. During these days, the percentage of low-income families increases from 40 percent to over 80 percent. Through dedicated underwriting, the Museum also works directly with Title 1 school groups to offer free field trips with transportation. Title1 schools have 50 percent or more of their students qualify for reduced or free lunch programs under Federal guidelines.